Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01421 301541Z ACTION COM-04

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E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: EAID, LE

SUBJECT: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANON: REORGANIZING

LEBANON'S TELEPHONE SYSTEM

REF: (A) STATE 037956, (B) BEIRUT 0401

1. EMBASSY HAS STUDIED REFTEL AND SECTIONS 607 AND 661 OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT. BEFORE APPROACHING GOL, WOULD APPRECIATE ANSWERS TO FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. ARE SECTION 661 GRANT FUNDS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE FOR LEBANON? IF SO, HOW MUCH?

B. MUST ALL THREE OF THE CRITERIA LISTED IN PARA 1 REF A FOR USE OF THESE FUNDS BE MET OR ONLY ONE OF THE THREE?

C. HOW IS COST OF SERVICES THAT MIGHT BE PROVIDED TO GOL UNDER SECTION 607 COMPUTED?

2. LEBANON TODAY WANTS AND NEEDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS, INCLUDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION. IF USG WERE PREPARED TO PROVIDE SOME FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE, IT CERTAINLY MIGHT LEAD TO "FOLLOW-ON SALE OF US GOODS AND/OR SERVICES" AND POSSIBLY TO FURTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INVOLVEMENT BY USG ON A REIMBURSABLE BASIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOL MAY NOT BE INTERESTED IN PAYING FOR SUCH SERVICES SINCE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES ARE OFFERING FREE TECHNICAL ADVICE IN HOPE AND EXPECTATION OF FOLLOW-ON COMMERCIAL SALES. (EXAMPLES: BRITISH-PORT DEVELOPMENT; BELGIANS--RAILROAD MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION; FRENCH--URBAN PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT FOR CENTER-CITY BEIRUT). IT WOULD

GIVE AN IMPORTANT BOOST TO US COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES IF WE COULD DO THE SAME.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT AND AID'S ADVICE ON HOW USG COULD RESPOND MOST EFFECTIVELY TO LEBANESE INTEREST IN US TECHNOLOGY WITH THE TWIN GOALS OF ASSISTING LEBANON'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR US FIRMS TO BENEFIT FROM RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON.

4. RE PARA 2 REFTEL, HAS ENGELSON RESPONDED ON POSSIBLE IESC INVOLVEMENT IN TELEPHONE PROJECT? PARKER

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